

COMMODORE

COMPUTER



USERS

GROUP

CLUB

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CLUB ROOMS: \*MILTON STATE SCHOOL, BAYSWATER ROAD, MILTON\*  
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NEWSLETTER

Vol.2 No.5

MAY 1984  
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DIARY FOR JUNE  
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Group meetings on Tuesday, 4th June, 1984 at 7.30 pm in our club rooms.

Workshop meeting on Sunday, 17th June, 1984 from 1pm till 5pm in our club rooms. Bring your own equipment. Please note that workshop meetings are for members only!

See page 5 for further details.  
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## COMMODORE COMPUTER USER'S GROUP (QLD) DIRECTORY

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	PETER REEVE	Ph. 378 2665

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Please contact Committee members of the relevant Sub-Committee as regards specific computer problems.

To ensure a prompt reply when contacting committee members by mail, please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope!

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All editorial matter for next month's issue has to be in the possession of the editor no later than the second Tuesday of that month. The editorial address is:  
24 Kaloma Rd. The Gap, Brisbane, 4061.

The opinions expressed herein are those of the Author(s), and not necessarily those of the C.C.U.G.(Q) or the Editor.

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## EDITORIAL

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This issue brings you the first of a six-part series of articles on disk use by Paul Blair of the Canberra Users Group. Paul has the enviable ability to explain a complex subject in terms that anybody can understand (I wish there were more like him in the micro-computer field!). He also made the articles available free of charge to the group, thus we have reason to be doubly grateful!

The third reason for gratitude is a more personal one, namely the fact that Paul supplied all the articles on disk, in the form of sequential files, for loading directly into a word processor. This makes the task of your editor much easier. Many thanks Paul!

Those of you who are contemplating to submit articles (yes, we are living in hope!), herewith some guide lines:

A: Wherever possible supply the article on disk or tape, if you are using a word processor. It does not matter if your W.P. produces the text in the form of sequential or program files, as my W.P. (PaperClip) can handle both.

B: To get an idea what your final text will look like, format it with a text width of 56 characters, with justification turned on. This is the format used for this newsletter.

Last, but not least, we would like to welcome Brisbane's oldest Commodore dealer, C.W. Electronics, as one of our advertisers.

Remember members, we do need the support of our advertisers, but they of course do need your support!

\*

RALPH DE VRIES

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## NOTES & GOSSIP

### PROGRAMMING COURSES

The following programming courses have been proposed, subject to enrolments:

BASIC Part 1, an 8 week course, starting on Wednesday, 13th June at 7.30 pm in our Club Rooms.

Course Fees: Members \$50.00 - Non-Members \$80.00.

BASIC Part 2, a 12 week course, starting on Monday, 11th June at 7.30 pm in our Club Rooms.

Course Fees: Members \$75.00 - Non-Members \$100.00.

On conclusion of the Basic 2 course an Assembly Language Course will be arranged for those members who meet certain basic entrance requirements.

Phone Derek Farrell at 359 8559 (after working hours) for further details.

### JUNE LECTURES

The following talks will be given during our meeting on Tuesday 5th June:

Derek Farrell will talk about: "Logical Operators"

Greg Perry will talk about: "File Handling for Disk Users"

### REGIONAL MEETINGS

Two sub-groups have now been formed on the South side of Brisbane.

The first of these operates in the Woodridge - Kingston area, and you can ring Terry Steer at 200 5926 for further details.

The second one has just been formed in the Cannon Hill area, and your contact is Barry Wilson at 399 6204, or Aug. Norman at 399 2080.

Not to be outdone the Northsiders are now preparing two sub-groups as well.

The first one of these will centre around Strathpine, and will thus serve our members as far as Caboolture, Redcliffe, Bracken Ridge etc. In the first instance contact Clayton Lancaster at 285 4157.

The second one has been proposed for the Stafford area, and thus can serve a large part of the Northern suburbs. Contact Rodney Finlayson for further details at 356 5927.

Please ring the above members after 6 pm, as they all have to work for a living!

#### LOST

One of our members lost a club cassette program during our April workshop meeting. The program in question was the 64 version of 'The Attack of the Mutant Camel'. If you have accidentally taken this home, would you please return it to our librarian Cliff Pottinger?

#### WORKSHOP MEETINGS

Some of our new members seem to be under a misapprehension regarding the purpose of our workshop meetings.

Their main purpose is to assist members with programming- or hardware problems.

Recently we have seen several members bringing their computers, TV sets, disk drives etc. just to play games! You are of course welcome to do so, but wouldn't it be easier and less fatiguing to leave all that gear at home, and play your favourite games in comfortable domestic surroundings?

At a recent meeting we had a good example of what a workshop is for. A member had problems using certain programs on his CBM-64 and 1526 printer. By the time he went home he had an updated ROM chip in his printer, and most of his programs were working!

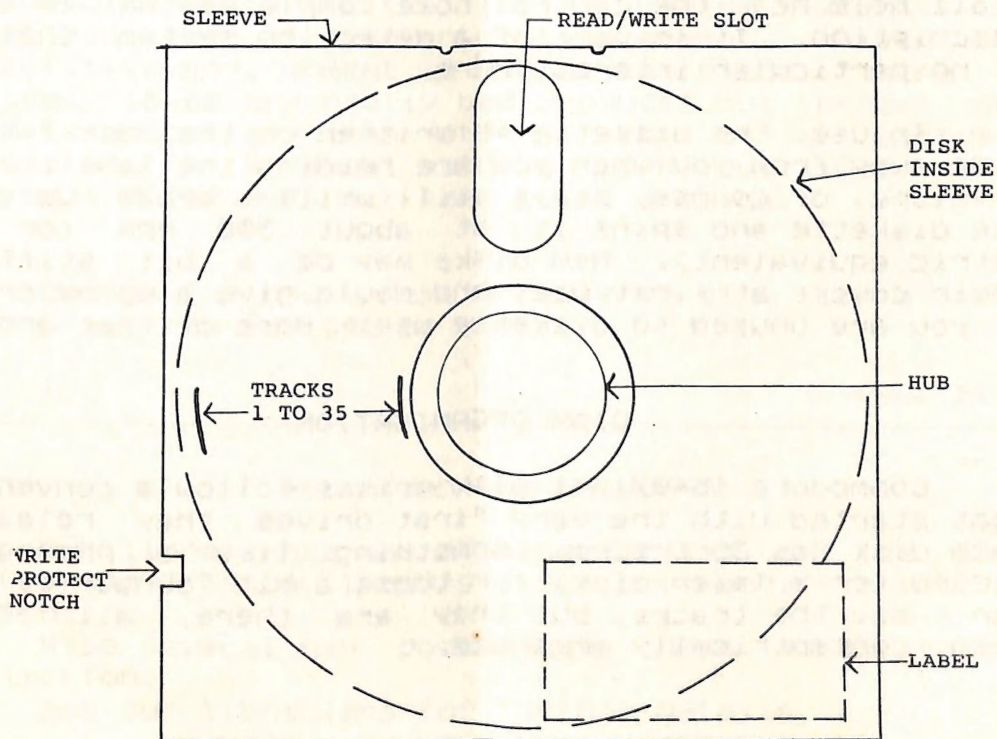
So there it is. Leave your games at home and bring your problems to the next workshop meeting!



## STARTING WITH DISK DRIVES

At recent Canberra User Group meetings, there have been some open discussions for members starting out with disk drives. For the record, let me set down the main points that have been discussed, so that others can learn more about their drives.

The little box that you feed diskettes is very intelligent, and can be used very effectively with a little understanding. Just as your computer is fitted with an operating system that allows you to use Basic words for programs, so too disk drives have their own operating system. This system is most commonly named the Disk Operating System (DOS) but I think that Disk Basic is a more readily understood concept. Before going any further, however, let's find out what a diskette is.



The diskettes used in most computer disk drives are sheets of a plastic-type material, with coated surfaces that are designed for magnetic recording. Each disk is about 130 mm diameter, with a 30 mm hole in the centre. Both sides of the disk are coated, and factory quality control decides whether one or both sides come up to quality standards, labelling the results as single or double sided disks.

The actual disk is housed in a sleeve or envelope, usually lined with a wiper-type material that collects the dirt and dust that accumulates on the disk itself. The envelope is about 165 mm square, with a long slot through which the recording head can access the disk. On one edge (the left side as you look at a disk as you insert it into a drive) is a 'write-protect' slot. If not covered, you can both read and write to the disk. If a tab is stuck over the notch, you can read but not write to the disk, thereby protecting disks from accidental writing or erasure. There are two small nicks along one edge, to act as stress relief. A final small hole near the central hole completes the envelope description. It is part of a detection system that is of no particular interest here.

In use, the diskette is written on the back - the side away from you when you are reading the label. The envelope, of course, stays still while a broad hub grips the diskette and spins it at about 300 rpm (or its metric equivalent). New disks may be a bit stiff in their covers at first use, and could give a worry or two if you are unused to diskette use. More of that anon.

## DISK ORGANISATION

Commodore 1540/1541 disk drives follow a convention that started with the very first drives they released. Each disk has 35 tracks, something like a phonograph record (or a laser disk, for those a bit younger!!) You can't see the tracks, but they are there, all 35 of them, concentrically arranged.



Another convention is how they are 'named' - Track 1 is at the outer edge and Track 35 at the inner. That is how the first subdivision is arranged.

The next subdivision is carving up each track into more convenient bits, named sectors (or blocks - the names seem to be interchangeable). Each sector is designed to hold 256 bytes of information, so that 4 blocks are needed to hold 1K of information. Because the disk circumference is greater at the outer edge, there is room for more sectors in each track at the outer edge, decreasing as you come towards the centre. Commodore has taken advantage of this to pack a bit more storage onto their disks. Track 1 has 21 sectors (numbered 0-20) while Track 35 has only 17 (0-16). In all, there are 683 sectors on an empty disk. Nineteen of these are set aside for the directory track, so 664 remain for you to use. If you think about it for a minute, a sector is quite tiny - on Track 1, less than 19 mm long.

Choice of diskettes is a complex subject, and sometimes one of violent disagreement. Given the competitive environment in the market place, there are unlikely to be any really bad products out there. Some seem to be better than others, but it is virtually impossible for a casual user to work out some rating scheme. Price does not seem to be a guide.

Enough for now - next article we will look at Disk Basic, and how you get to use it.

\*

PAUL BLAIR

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Attention CBM-64 USERS:

Our library has now obtained copies of the LOGO, PILOT, and G-PASCAL languages for your edification and delight.

Also several new books have been added to our collection.

See our librarians for further details.

## VIC-20 NEWS

## VIC GAMES REVIEW

Games by courtesy of Chandlers, 43 Adelaide Street.

VIDEO VERMIN	Cartridge	\$40.00
LASER ZONE	Cartridge	\$45.95

In the first of these two games: "Video Vermin" you are the gardener trying to rid your yard of all sorts of pests like ants, moths, butterflies etc who, when you hit them, hide under mushrooms and multiply. The deadliest one is the butterfly bouncing up and down, because, when he hits you, you're dead. The graphics and screen change colour with each level and make for quite a good action game.

The other cartridge: "Laser Zone" is a grid-type game. You are the zone-gunner against the aliens which cross your screen. There are two laser cannons mounted at right angles which you move horizontally and vertically to cross-fire. Another good feature of the game is a practice mode which lets you get the hang of turning your lasers at a 45° angle. Most essential for an experienced "Zone Gunner". Written by Jeff Minter (Of Mutant Camels fame), it's a game to keep you on your toes every second.

TANKS	(Computer Classics)	\$19.95
CASTLE TOLLENKAR	(Computer Classics)	

In "Tanks" your tank tries to outshoot the enemy in a deserted town. The enemy drops obstacles that block your way, but you can shoot for points. The best tactics we found, were to shoot and at the same time move closer to the enemy. At times it becomes a game of out-thinking the enemy and being quick on the trigger.

"Castle Tollenkar" is another text type adventure game. We couldn't even get into the castle in this one. Very frustrating! Even with a cheater's peek at the listing we were still stumped. Any ideas?



## KNOW YOUR CHILD'S IQ (Commodore 16K exp.required)

This program consists of a program tape and a data tape which contains the test questions in three categories: Classification - Science - Pattern Matching. It asks the child's name and age, and after each test gives an IQ rating, with an average after three tests. A very interesting program, with some of the questions to make even an adult think twice about the answers. It covers children in the 5 to 11 years age group. No price provided with this one, but an interesting program to look at, even if only to rate your child. You may have a budding genius on your hands, and not be aware of it!

To the gentleman in Toowoomba who rang me regarding the 64 version of "Bastow Manor". To get inside the gate you climb the tree, break off a branch, and poke it through the gate to get at the key which lies on the other side of the gate! That's all the clues for to-day! I hope that all you frustrated Adventure Game Players in Toowoomba can now get a move on! Cheers!

\* Julianne Fallen

## EXPANSION BOARDS

VIC members who have ordered the expansion boards are hereby advised that they are now ready for collection, at \$27.00 each.

VIC users with Disk Drives:

The June meeting could be of great interest to you, particularly as regards file handling!

\* Roger Haigh

**CBM 64 NOTES****Modems and The Australian Beginning  
or what to do after midnight!**

Since I have recently bought a CICADA 300 Modem (about \$170 from METRO FORD (!) of all people), I have spent most of this week finding out what I can do with it.

Firstly, a MODEM connects your computer to the telephone line via an RS 232C cartridge on the USER Port.

What can you do with it though ?. You may well ask. The modem connection allows you the potential to connect your computer to any other computer, anywhere in the world, which is similarly connected to the end of a phone line. The only extra required is a terminal program in each computer.

Locally, this means that you can talk to, and more importantly, swap programs with other users in Brisbane (and interstate if you have a bottomless wallet) via the phone. I have done quite a bit of this in the last week, and, providing it is a local call - the process is somewhat slow - it is useful to be able to obtain a program when you want it, instead of having to drive all the way across town.

Many of you will have heard of The Australian Beginning (called TAB in short, no betting allowed!). This is a public data base system which is located in Melbourne (unfortunately!) and users with a modem, and an appropriate terminal program, can gain access 24 hours a day. For us, this generally means using a special Telecom AUSTPAC line, since users can access TAB (in Melbourne) at a rate much cheaper than normal STD charges. (For those of you who are interested, AUSTPAC is an Australia-wide, computer controlled network especially designed for communications between computers and the like. This sends each message as a 'packet' of data at very high speed so that thousands (+) of messages can be sent via the same line virtually at the same time.)



The Australian Beginning provides up-to-date information services (although somewhat limited at the present time), electronic mail and telex facilities, free software (none for Commodore yet!!), and other services including a CHAT mode wherein you can 'chat' to other users on the system. The chat mode is one of the more interesting features since it is far cheaper than STD if you wish to talk to or send programs (again UNAVAILABLE to Commodore users as yet!) to anyone in other states.

You may have gathered by now that TAB have not got their act together for Commodore users. They have been promiising to do so for some time and we will just have to keep on their backs until they provide us with the same facilities as other computer users.

If you would like more info on TAB then bring the subject up at one of our user meetings or you may like to attend the next TAB user meeting which will be held at the TANDY Computer Centre, Wickham Street, Fortitude Valley on Thursday 24th May from 7.00 pm to 9.30 pm.

To use TAB you must first of all become a member. CCUGQ has taken advantage of a special computer club offer and can provide memberships to TAB at a special discount rate of approximately \$20. The membership kit provides you with your own USER NAME and PASSWORD which allow access to all of TAB'S facilities.

Once you are a member, you are charged for using the system at the following rates:

TAB costs : Monday - Friday	
8am - 6pm	\$10.00 /hr
6pm - 8am	\$4.50 /hr
Weekends	
all day	\$4.50 /hr

(Special discounts for members of computer clubs : less 20% off the above charges)

Additionally, there are the phone charges:

AUSTPAC: Monday - Friday

8am - 6pm \$4.95 /hr

6pm - 8am \$3.95 /hr

Weekends

all day \$3.95 /hr

I plan to join TAB when our membership kits arrive. If you want more details contact me on 383295.

One last thing, if you want to have a look around, it is possible to dial up TAB as a visitor for the cost of a local call. This is done as follows.

- 1) Connect your modem and load a terminal program.
- 2) Dial AUSTPAC on 01921
- 3) Wait for an answer (about 3 rings) and you should then get the computer tone.
- 4) Switch the modem from phone to modem.
- 5) Type H and press return. The message AUSTPAC should then appear on the screen.
- 6) Then type    PROF 7 <return>  
                SET? 15:1 <return>

The message PARIS 15:1 (or similar appears)

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** All entries above must be in American, that is in UPPER CASE.\*\*

- 7) Connect with TAB by typing  
      ?238220000 <return>
- 8) When the connection is established, follow the instructions (press return) and for the USER NAME enter the name VISITOR and for the PASSWORD enter VISITOR . Thereafter follow the instructions on the screen.

To sign off (log off) type bye <return>.



## BOOK REVIEWS : Additions to Club Library:

BOOK : The Anatomy of the Commodore 64  
AUTHOR : Too many to name!  
PUBLISHER : ABACUS  
SUPPLIER : Review copy from C.W. Electronics.

An interesting book (translated from the German) which is recommended for the machine language programmer. It provides a complete annotated disassembly of the C64 BASIC and KERNAL ROMs and useful hints on how to use the routines to their best advantage. A discussion of machine language programming of other C64 features (6526 I/O ports, RS 232 etc) is also included.

RATING : Recommended (Advanced programmers only)

PRICE : \$29.95 (at least 30% too high!)

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BOOK : More on the Sixtyfour  
AUTHOR : H.C.Wagner  
PUBLISHER : W.Hofacker GMBH Int.  
SUPPLIER : CHANDLERS, Adelaide St.

Another book for the machine language programmer. It provides assembler listings of programs for hex-decimal, addition, mult. and division, disk utilities, screen dumps, RS 232 and Centronics interfaces, additions of new Commands to Basic etc.

RATING : Useful

Price : approx \$19.00 (less club discount)

\*

Greg Perry

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## MULTIPLAN SPREADSHEET: A First Look

Many spreadsheet program are now appearing for the C64. In previous issues we have had a brief look at CALC RESULT and EASY CALC RESULT (a la EASY CALC from Commodore). Both of these are quite impressive, even more so now that the prices have dropped to approximately \$180 and \$90 respectively.

Recently, a C64 version of MULTIPLAN has become available, retailing for approx. \$140. If you are in the market for one of the more powerful spreadsheets, this program is definitely worth a look.

The package comes with the program and 'help' files on a protected disk (only one copy supplied) and a very extensive tutorial and manual of 300+ pages.

MULTIPLAN has been available on many other computers (Apple, IBM, TANDY etc.) since 1982. This C64 version appears to be very similar, if not identical to that used on other machines.

Unfortunately, space limitations in our magazine do not permit an extensive discussion of Multiplan but, briefly, it offers the usual spreadsheet features with the ability to build a calculation based on formulae which may be readily replicated across a number of columns and rows.

When Multiplan is loaded, the screen shows a number of rows and columns with the commands listed on three lines at the bottom of the screen. The command '?' calls up the 'help' disk to give you a summary of the various commands and their syntax.

All the commands are full English words, which some may see as more informative than the usual spreadsheets. Multiplan offers some extra facilities over other spreadsheets:



- Column width may be selected for individual columns as well as globally (for all columns)

- Cells and rows may be given names and these names may be used in calculations instead of the usual row/column numbers. For example, if row 2 is called Sales, and row 5 is called Expenses, row 7 can be called Profit and given the formula : Sales - Expenses = Profit. Therefore, whenever Sales and Expenses are updated, the Profit is also updated.

- Extensive printout facilities including adjustable margins, automatic pagination (splitting into pages), and complete printout of all formulae.

- Ability to read VisiCalc disk files.

- Extensive mathematical functions including Standard Deviation, Lookup, Net Present Value (interest calculations), string functions (LEN etc.).

- Multiple Windows, UP to 8 on the screen at once. Optional borders for each window. Each window may be linked to scroll dependent or independent of other windows.

- A SORT facility to sort a range of columns in either ascending or descending order with reference to a selected column.

- Many sheets can be linked together to provide a three-dimensional capability.

- Iteration facility allows calculation of forward references and can be used to solve quadratic equations and more complicated business formulas

- Only limited graphical capability.

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## Summary:

Definitely worth a close look if you are in the market. I am undecided on whether it is better than the more expensive CALC RESULT. In some respects, MULTIPLAN is easier to use and slightly faster, but CALC RESULT offers nice graphical output and interesting 3-D facilities. MULTIPLAN's manual is definitely more informative.

Overall rating : Excellent  
Manual : Very good

Our copy of Multiplan by courtesy of Chandlers, 43 Adelaide St. Brisbane.

\* Greg Perry

## =====

## AUTHORS WANTED

-----  
We recently had a phone call from Mr. Andrew Farrell, the new editor of the Australian Commodore Review magazine.

If you feel that you can contribute articles or programs to this magazine contact Mr. Farrell at 02/935123, or write to him at: Suite 206, Marvic House, 656 Pittwater Road, Brookvale, NSW, 2100.

## =====

## HEAR YE - HEAR YE

Reset Switches are now available for purchase - its purpose is to recover from crashes or infinite loop situations, without loss of program memory. Plugs into serial port. COST \$4.00

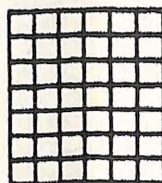
Ph.075/451717 weekend nights ANTHONY THYSSEN



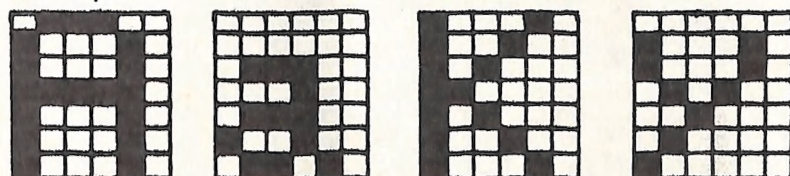
## TO DESCEND OR NOT TO DESCEND

Regular readers may have noticed that the print looks slightly 'different' from the last issue. The reason is a new character ROM chip, which has been fitted to the 801 printer.

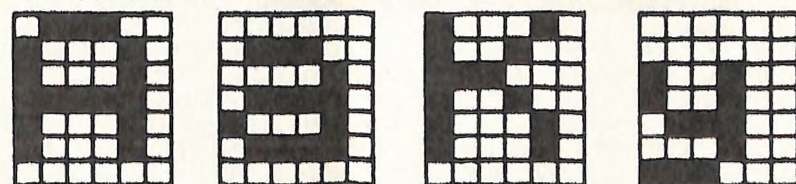
Characters on this printer are formed by a 6x7 dot matrix:



Herewith a few examples of the original character matrix (notice how lower case letters like "y" sit on top of the line):



And herewith the same letters produced by the new character ROM (notice how both upper & lower case letters start on the second "row", thus allowing the descenders on j, p, q, and y to drop below the line):



The Commodore graphics characters have not been changed.

This new character ROM was designed by Paul Blair of Canberra, and executed by Ralph Down of the Southport Users Group, at a cost of \$20.00.

As the appearance of the printed text is so much better, it surprises me that Commodore have not implemented a similar change.

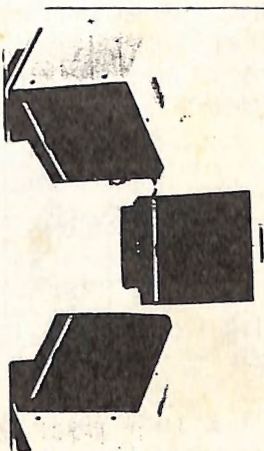
\*

Ralph De Vries



CONTACT:  
LES VAN TOVIER  
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221.7822

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